

VFF CANADA. National  
Capital Commission

# Early Days in the Ottawa Country

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## SONGS OF THE OTTAWA

### *Ye Maidens of Ontario*

Ye maidens of Ontario, give ear to what I write,  
In driving down these rapid streams where raftsmen take delight,  
In driving down these rapid streams as jolly raftsmen do,  
While your lowland loafing farmer boys can stay at home with you.

These lowland loafing farmer boys, they tell the girls great tales  
Of all the dangers they go through in crossing o'er their fields.  
The cutting of the grass so green is all that they can do.  
While we poor jolly raftsmen are running the Long Soo.

Before I'd been in Quebec long — in weeks 'twas scarcely three,  
The landlord's lovely daughter did fall in love with me.  
She told me that she loved me, and she took me by the hand,  
And shyly told her mother that she loved a shantyman.

"O daughter, dearest daughter, you grieve my heart full sore,  
To fall in love with a shantyman you never saw before."  
"Well, mother, I don't care for that, so do the best you can,  
For I'm bound to go to Ottawa with my roving shantyman."

### *Les Raftsmen*

Là ousqu'y sont, tous les raftsmen?  
Là ousqu'y sont, tous les raftsmen?  
Dans les chanquiers i'sont montés

#### REFRAIN

Bing sur la ring! Bang sur la ring!  
Laissez passer les raftsmen,  
Bing sur la ring! Bing, bang!

Et par Bytown y sont passés, 2)  
Avec leurs provisions achetées.

Que l'Outaouais fut étonné, 2)  
Tant faisait d'bruit leur hach' trempée.

From *Folk Songs of Canada* by Edith Fulton Fowke and Richard Johnston. Reproduced with the permission of the publishers, Waterloo Music Co. Ltd., Waterloo, Ont.

# Early Days in the Ottawa Country

## A SHORT HISTORY OF OTTAWA, HULL AND THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

PUBLISHED 1967  
by the National Capital Commission



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*The site of Ottawa and Hull in 1825, by Maj. G. A. Eliot*



# OTTAWA

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Canada's capital is built where the Ottawa River tumbles over the Chaudière\* Falls and, a short distance downstream, the Gatineau and Rideau\*\* Rivers flow in from the north and south. Here Champlain paused and portaged on his way westward in 1613. The priests, soldiers and traders travelled past these cliffs. Here a war party of Iroquois went by in 1660 on their way to meet Dollard at the Long Sault in a fateful encounter. By this place passed most of the great overland explorers. Champlain called the Ottawa "la grande rivière des Algommequins" and early English traders called it the Grand River. "Ottawa" is the anglicised form of Outaouac or Outaouais, the name of an Indian tribe from Lake Huron who were prominent in trade with the French in the seventeenth century. They carried furs by the river that now bears their name.

Philemon Wright, seeing the value of the magnificent stands of white and red pine in the valley and the good agricultural land there, started the first settlement in this region in 1800 on the north or Quebec shore. But his story belongs to that of Hull. Settlement began on the south side of the river in 1809, when Ira Honeywell settled on the Ottawa between the Chaudière and Lake Deschênes. Shortly afterward Braddish Billings cut out a farm on the Rideau River (present-day Billings Bridge). A few other settlers moved in near both Billings and Honeywell.\*\*\* Somewhat later a store was established below the Chaudière on a point, named Bellow's Landing after the store-owner.

After 1815, British veterans of the Napoleonic Wars and the war against the United States came up the Ottawa to get land. In 1818 officers and men of the disbanded 99th and 100th Regiments of Foot, two units

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\* Chaudière, or boiling pot, is the French translation of the Indian name "Asticou".

\*\* Rideau, or curtain, is the French name, given because of the appearance of the falls where the river tumbles into the Ottawa.

\*\*\*The Billings house of 1829 is that fine white structure on the heights at Billings Bridge. The Thompson house of 1834 is at 529 Richmond Road.



*The Chaudière bridge, 1827, by Lt. Col. John By*

that had fought in Canada during the War of 1812, arrived in the autumn with their families to take up grants in the Military Settlement in Goulbourn Township. They cut a road from Bellow's Landing, renamed Richmond Landing, to the new village (called Richmond) on the Goodwood (Jock) River. A few months before this large group arrived, three Scottish families passed by this way enroute to settle in Beckwith Township now in the County of Lanark, at a place that came to be called "The Derry".

Civilians and former soldiers settled in March Township about this time. Here, along the shore of Lake Deschênes the more well-to-do among them erected fine homes, one or two of which still stand today; the ruins of several others, mute memorials of a luxury ordinarily undreamed of on the frontier, suggest the gentlemanly way of life of the English countryside.\* The pioneers erected three Anglican churches, two of which still stand, at Huntley and at South March.\*\* In 1819 the Duke of Richmond, Governor-in-Chief of British North America, came overland from Kingston via Perth to see the military settlers and died tragically of rabies in a hut

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\* Henry Wentworth Monk, the son of Captain John Benning Monk of March, who went to school in England, became an associate of Holman Hunt, famous painter of the Pre-Raphaelite School. Hunt's portrait of Monk hangs in the National Gallery in Ottawa.

\*\*The third is a picturesque ruin by the river shore near the north end of March township.



near the village named after him.

Meanwhile, about the Rideau River and the Chaudière Falls, Billings, Honeywell and their neighbours cut out small clearings; but, except for a farm owned by Nicholas Sparks and a small clearing at the Rideau mouth, the central area of the future capital remained forest, beaver-meadow and swamp. Sparks' property comprised the very middle of modern Ottawa, from Bronson Avenue to Waller Street, extending southward from Wellington Street to Laurier Avenue. He generously donated land for two churches and for a market hall (the latter, near Elgin Street at Slater became the City Hall).

During the War of 1812 communications by the St. Lawrence River, the main route to the settled area in Upper Canada, had been under American attack. For the future a safer water route between Montreal and the Great Lakes was urgently needed. Ten years were spent in sporadic investigation and consideration of a route by the Rideau and Cataraqui River systems and finally in 1826 Lieutenant-Colonel John By of the Royal Engineers was sent to the Chaudière to construct a canal from that point to Kingston. Where Ottawa is today, the Earl of Dalhousie, who had succeeded the Duke of Richmond, had wisely secured commanding ground for the Crown in 1823, and adjacent to this By laid out two settlements called Upper and Lower Town, separated by part of the Government lands called Barrack Hill (the present Parliament Hill). Work on the canal began the next year.\* Meanwhile, in the autumn of 1826, enterprising men from Richmond and March had come in to get land and start houses, and new settlers came up the river. Irish labourers, who had emigrated to Canada, victims of over-population in their own land, lived in a conglomeration of cabins and dugouts west of the canal called "Corkstown".

Upper and Lower Town jointly received the name "Bytown" after the canal engineer, early in 1827. The canal was opened in 1832 and the town began to grow. Stores, manufactories\*\* and banks were set up, churches and schools were built and a little manufacturing community was started in New Edinburgh about the Rideau Falls. Steamboats plied the river and canal, and a newspaper, the Bytown Gazette, was started in 1836. In this year, too, George Buchanan built a timber slide to by-pass the Chaudière Falls, replacing a narrow slide that By had built on his arrival. Shortly after Buchanan's Slide was opened, Sir Francis Bond Head, Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, the first of a long series of illustrious visitors to the Ottawa to have the experience, was given an

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\* The Commissariat Building beside the canal locks below Parliament Hill was built in 1827. Today it is the Bytown Museum.

\*\*Stoves and axes were among the articles made.

exhilarating ride down this chute on a timber-crib.

Perth, a military settlement like Richmond, was for some time the administrative centre of the old District of Bathurst in which Bytown was situated, but in 1842 the District of Dalhousie was set up, with Bytown as its district town. A court house and jail were built. Most of the French-speaking and English-speaking townspeople lived in relative peace, though the "Shiners", Irish raftsmen, were rough and rowdy. The rebellions of 1837 had left Bytown relatively unruffled, but the troubles of 1849, following the passage of the Rebellion Losses Bill,\* produced a riot called "Stony Monday". After a wild outburst, the Tory forces rallied with arms on Barrack Hill and the Reformers, also armed, assembled in Lower Town, but troops of the garrison stood firm on Sappers' Bridge over the canal between them until the rioters dispersed.

The telegraph came up from Montreal in 1850, a sign of progress. Though its streets, depending on the weather, were either muddy or dusty, Bytown could now boast of some fine stone buildings, particularly on Sussex\*\* and Wellington Streets. A change was coming about in the timber industry, long sustained by the British demand for squared red and white pine logs, for the British system of preferential import duties had been abandoned. In the United States the accessible forest stands of the east were depleted and sawn lumber was needed to house a growing population. Also the American railway and canal network by now extended to the Canadian border, making transportation easy. Encouraged by these favourable conditions, beginning in 1853 a group of American lumbermen came to Bytown and established sawmills at the Chaudière. Soon the islands about the falls and flats on both shores were covered with lumber piles, and loaded barges were on their way to the American market.

In December, 1854, the Bytown and Prescott Railway\*\*\* reached New Edinburgh and next spring a bridge took the tracks over the Rideau to a station near Sussex Street. The town was becoming an industrial centre. Gasworks on King Street, (King Edward Avenue) provided illumination for some buildings and fitfully lit the plank sidewalks on moonless nights.

In 1855 Bytown became a city and took the name Ottawa, just in time to receive a great honour — and to assume a great responsibility. The

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\* *The Rebellion Losses Bill* reimbursed those who had suffered loss or damage to property in the Rebellion of 1837-38. The Tories considered that the Bill aided disloyal people.

\*\*Académie de-La-Salle, the Basilica, the stone buildings at Sussex and Murray and Sussex and George, are early structures, though most have been modified.

\*\*\*At Prescott soon it met the Grand Trunk Railway that joined Montreal and Toronto in October, 1856.



United Province of Canada, since its formation in 1841, had shuttled its capital between Kingston, Toronto, Montreal and Quebec and was now trying to agree on a permanent site. At the end of 1857 Queen Victoria settled the dispute, choosing Ottawa. Government buildings for the new capital were designed in the Gothic Revival style and contracts were let in 1859. The next year the Prince of Wales, the future King Edward VII, laid the cornerstone of the Parliament Building on Barrack Hill, henceforth to be Parliament Hill. The new railway carried stone from Ohio and New York State for the buildings and took lumber back from the Ottawa valley.

*The centre of Ottawa, 1876, by H. Brosius*







*A crib of timber in the slide, Ottawa, about 1880*

Parliament Hill was not crowned with its Gothic structures for some time. The task was hard, the cost much greater than expected. It was not until late 1865 that the government of the Province of Canada moved into the Eastern and Western Departmental Buildings; the legislature occupied the Parliament Building in 1866. Rideau Hall, the house of Thomas MacKay, a former masonry contractor who had built the canal locks up from the Ottawa and set up mills in New Edinburgh, was adapted as a home for the Governor-General.\* The next year the first Parliament of the new Dominion of Canada met in the incomplete Parliament Building; the tower was unfinished and the library was not yet built. In Ontario and Quebec Fenian\*\* raids from the United States had been repulsed in 1866; these Irish troubles had their repercussions in Ottawa. On April 8, 1868

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\*The first Governor-General, Viscount Monck, found the Ottawa streets so bad that he journeyed to and from Parliament Hill in a long-boat manned by bluejackets.

\*\*The Fenians were Irish veterans of the American Civil War who were violently opposed to Britain.



a sombre event shook the capital; D'Arcy McGee, one of the Fathers of Confederation, who had taken a strong stand against the Fenians, after delivering a speech late at night in the Commons, was assassinated outside his lodgings nearby. A plaque at 142 Sparks Street marks the spot.

The nation enjoyed a brief prosperity during most of the next decade. Ottawa grew and the government expanded as the Dominion extended its authority over more and more of British North America. Transportation was needed, so a street railway began to run horse-drawn cars in 1870 from New Edinburgh to the Chaudière. None too soon, Ottawa finally got a water-system in 1874 and a trunk sewer two years later. The first telephone was installed in 1877, in the Prime Minister's office, and the next year the Governor-General experimented with another invention, T. A. Edison's phonograph. "Ladies and Gentlemen," said the Marquis of Dufferin as he spoke into the machine, "I have never had occasion to bottle my speech until now. I propose calling on you to give three cheers for Her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Victoria, 'Hip! Hip! Hurrah!' " Many fine homes and stores in stone and brick were built; the Departmental Buildings on the Hill were enlarged, the Mackenzie Tower on the West Block being completed in 1878. An old wooden City Hall near the canal was replaced in 1876 by a fine stone building on Elgin Street and a large post office was erected where the War Memorial is today. Parliament Hill and Major's Hill Park were landscaped. The beautification of Ottawa had begun. But sidewalks were still made of plank, the streets were still dusty in dry weather, muddy in wet, and street-cars and fire-reels ran on sleighrunners in winter. Every now and then one of the great saw-mills would catch fire and go up in a blaze, with columns of billowing smoke and sparks.

This was the age of the railroad. The Canada Central Railway joined Ottawa to a line running from Carleton Place to Brockville in 1870 and the line that had entered via New Edinburgh in 1855 built a new approach to serve the mills at the Chaudière in 1871. The first rail bridge over the Ottawa River was completed in 1880, above the Falls. Five years later militiamen from the capital went west by the nearly-complete Canadian Pacific transcontinental line to fight the rebellious Métis and Indians in the Saskatchewan country. The city's manufacturing industries grew, making sawmill equipment and providing for the needs of the surrounding area. Government was expanding, too. The Langevin Block on Wellington Street and a building near Nepean Point to house the Public Printing Office were built in this decade.

Electric street lights were introduced in 1885 but the 1890's marked the real beginning of the era of electricity in Ottawa. Thomas Ahearn and Warren Soper took over the horse-cars and established an electric street railway in 1891. By 1893 the street-car system was in full operation and

their factory was making trams for other Canadian cities. The city was badly cut up by railway tracks; in 1895 seven lines ran into Ottawa, served by four stations. But the streets were being improved; the laying of pavement began. A move to increase Ottawa's recreation area was taken in 1893 when the City bought Rockcliffe Park. In 1899 the Ottawa Improvement Commission was set up by the federal government to start making industrial Ottawa more beautiful.

April 26, 1900, was a day of horror. A fire started in Hull and, carried by the wind, soon destroyed a large segment of the city, flamed across the Chaudière and burned a swath through Ottawa as far as Dows Lake, making thousands homeless. The lumber piles had gone up in showers of sparks and embers; but their destruction did not yet signalize the end of the sawn-lumber industry in Ottawa and Hull.

Rebuilding after the fire was rapid. The Ottawa Improvement Commission, meanwhile, began its work of beautifying the capital to the designs of a Montreal landscape architect, Frederick G. Todd, cleaning up the banks of the canal, starting a driveway along its west side, making a boulevard and planting the elms on King Edward Avenue (cut down in 1965), and taking over on behalf of the City the development of Rockcliffe Park. This first decade of the twentieth century saw new wonders, the horseless carriage and heavier-than-air flight; the automobile and the aeroplane arrived in the capital.

In 1912 the Union Station and the Chateau Laurier Hotel, both built by the Grand Trunk Railway Company, were opened. On the night of February 3, 1916, during the height of the First World War, the Parliament Building caught fire and, except for the Library, was completely gutted by morning.\* Parliament moved to the newly built Royal Victoria Museum and reconstruction of the Centre Block began. The cornerstone of the Peace Tower was laid by the Prince of Wales in 1919. The costs of the war, the bankruptcy of two transcontinental railways and the expensive reconstruction of the Parliament Buildings now put a long halt to the beautification of Ottawa.

The new House of Commons was officially opened in 1920, a building designed in the Gothic style, but a rather more severe version than the original. It was not until 1927, however, that the Peace Tower was completed, a memorial to the War dead. Ottawa's Civic Hospital was opened in 1924 and more government office buildings were constructed about this time. In 1927 too, the Ottawa Improvement Commission was reconstituted as the Federal District Commission, and its sphere of

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\*The great bell in the tower struck midnight then crashed to the basement. It can be seen behind the Parliamentary Library.



interest was extended into the Province of Quebec. Next year the Commission built the Champlain Bridge as a first step towards extending the driveway system north of Ottawa and in succeeding years it enlarged the parks and driveways. The Government approved the purchase and clearing of the large site that is now Confederation Square, so as to provide a location for the War Memorial, making an open space in the city's centre that allows the Gothic beauty of the buildings on the Hill to be more easily seen. This decade, too, had pretty well seen the end of the sawn lumber industry in Ottawa. Pulp mills, utilizing the small spruce logs that were now the major forest crop, replaced the great sawmills.

The story of how the Federal District Commission, later the National Capital Commission, continued its work of beautification of the capital to the plans of the French town-planner Jacques Gréber is of too recent a date to belong in a history of old Ottawa. It can be found in other publications of the Commission.

Central Ottawa barely notices the great Ottawa River flowing by, hidden under high rocky cliffs. One of the capital's poets, William Wilfred Campbell described the river:

Out of the northern wastes, lands of winter and death,  
Regions of ruin and age, spaces of solitude lost;  
You wash and thunder and sweep,  
And dream and sparkle and creep,  
Turbulent, luminous, large,  
Scion of thunder and frost.  
Down past woodland and waste, lone as the haunting of even,  
Off shriveled and wind-moaning night when Winter hath  
    wizened the world;  
Down past hamlet and town,  
By marshes, by forests that frown,  
Brimming their desolate banks,  
Your tides to the ocean are hurled.

The river separates Ontario from Quebec. Much traffic flows back and forth over this interprovincial boundary by the bridges that link the two cities. Here is a short description of those bridges:

# BRIDGES OVER THE OTTAWA RIVER IN THE OTTAWA-HULL AREA

DATE	NAME	LOCATION	NATURE	CONSTRUCTION
1828	Union (This bridge fell in 1836)	Chaudière	Road	Wood truss
1843	Union Suspension	Chaudière	Road	Cable suspension
1889	(Damaged by fire in 1900)	Chaudière	Road	Steel truss
1919		Chaudière	Road	Steel truss
1880	Prince of Wales	West of Chaudière	Rail	Steel truss
1901	Alexandra	Nepean Point	Road and Rail	Steel cantilever and truss
1928	Champlain	Remic Rapids	Road	Plate girder
1965	Macdonald- Cartier	Dalhousie Street	Road	Box girder

For further reading on Ottawa see:

Ross, A. H. D., *Ottawa Past and Present*, Toronto, 1927.

Brault, Lucien, *Ottawa Old and New*, Ottawa, 1942.

Eggleston, Wilfrid, *The Queen's Choice*, Ottawa, 1961.

Hughson, J. W. and Bond, C. C. J.,

*Hurling Down the Pine*, Old Chelsea, Que., 1964.

Bond, Courtney C. J., *City on the Ottawa*, Ottawa, 1965, 1967.



# HULL

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The City of Hull is situated on the north, or Quebec shore of the Ottawa River, extending from the Little Chaudière Rapids to the mouth of the Gatineau.\*

The traditional portage paths past the Chaudière were on the north shore; the easternmost crossed the present-day Eddy Co. yards and at the Little Chaudière Rapids, not far upstream, another carry was necessary. In the Hull suburb of Val-Tétreau, beside the Ottawa in the park, a short walk downriver from the statue of the martyred priest Saint Jean de Brébeuf stands a monument showing the way to this old path up which explorer, missionary, soldier and trader trudged. Champlain, Nicolet, Brébeuf, Jolliet, Marquette, d'Iberville, Mackenzie, Fraser and Simpson have walked here. The crude steps, perhaps two hundred or more years old, where the "pork-eaters"\*\*\* of the fur companies packed their heavy trade bundles and birch-bark *canots de maître*, are still there. Before it carried away the forest wealth of its own valley the Ottawa River floated down many fortunes in furs from the *pays d'en haut*, but by the end of the eighteenth century the twilight of the fur trade by this route was approaching. As the trader went, the settler appeared.

In the spring of 1800 Philemon Wright came up the Ottawa with his family, his settlers and axemen, by sleigh on the ice, and arrived at the mouth of the Gatineau River. They had left Woburn, Massachusetts in February and came prepared to set up, under the leadership of Wright, a self-sufficient community. They established farms and gathered a harvest the first season. The Massachusetts men found the soil rich and the life good; their community prospered.

They had settled in the township of Hull, named after the city in England. Wright quickly built a grist mill and a saw-mill at the Chaudière Falls and in 1804, he added a blacksmith's shop that had four forges with

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\* Named after Nicolas Gatineau, trader and explorer.

\*\*The voyageurs lived on salt pork between Montreal and Fort William.



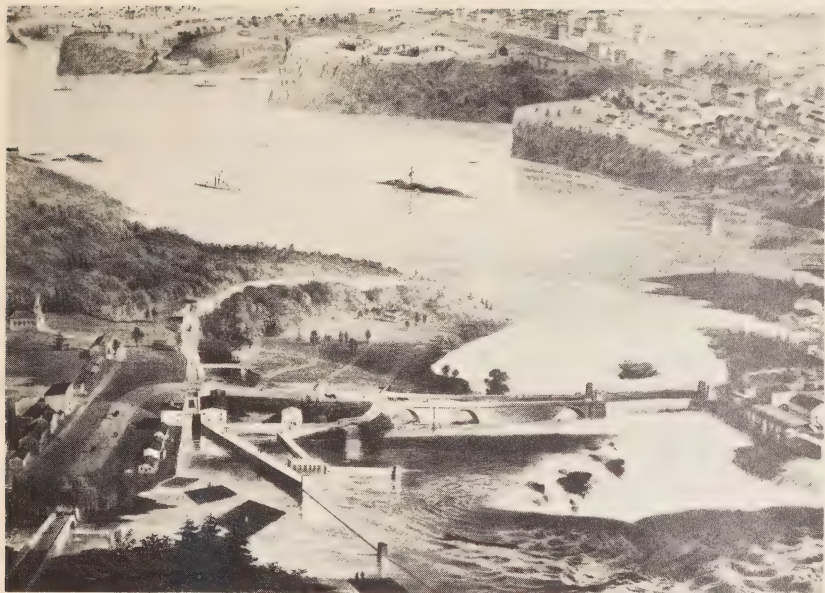
*Philemon Wright's mill and tavern at the Chaudière, 1823,  
by Henry DuVernet*

the bellows worked by water power. Soon a shoemaker's and a tailor's shop, a bake-house and a tannery were constructed. Part of the water from the falls was diverted to work the mills and forges by means of a stone wingdam, part of which still exists.

In 1806, Wright, with his nineteen year old son Tiberius and three other men set off for the port of Quebec on a raft made up of logs and boards cut from the trees on their lands. The trip was rough — it took them two months — but they got there, sold the lumber and arrived back before winter. Now the community was no longer operating on a subsistence basis; it had begun producing for the export market, creating wealth. They didn't depend on middlemen; they transported their own produce all the way to the market, nearly three hundred miles away, a tiresome journey that in later years, with the aid of steam tugs in the quiet river stretches, would only take ten days. That pioneer trip of 1806 was the start of the timber trade that was to become the economic mainstay of the valley for a century to come.

The community grew. Roads and bridges were made, a school was constructed in 1811 and a chapel in 1815. In the establishment at the falls, known as Wright's Village, the American farmer-capitalist built the Columbia Hotel in 1820, a three-storey building that remained an inn





*Wright's Town and the Chaudière, 1857, by Stent and Laver*

until 1871 and was destroyed by fire six years later. In 1823 a stone structure, St. James Anglican Church, was started. It burned in 1867. The Rev. Asa Meech, a Congregational minister from Massachusetts, was the first clergyman in the settlement. He was followed by the Rev. Amos Ansley of the Church of England who was also active in March and other townships up and down the river.

When Lt. Col. By arrived to build the Rideau Canal he put other works in hand, including the construction of a log channel to by-pass the Chaudière on the Bytown side, for which the firm of P. Wright & Sons built the diversion dams. He also had a bridge made over the river, and the Wrights built the approaches.\* Colonel By cleverly designed a wood truss bridge to span the wide gap over the turbulent Chaudière. His log channel permitted the descent of individual timbers without the bruising that resulted from passage over the falls.

The Wrights were not satisfied with the improvement; Ruggles, Philemon's son, went to Scandinavia, studied the timber slides there, came back and designed one that would let a complete unit of a raft, called a

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\*Two original arches of this bridge still support the westerly roadway opposite the Hydro-Québec plant at the falls.

crib, pass through. He cut his slide in 1829 through solid rock to join an existing waterway. Part of it can be seen today, just to the south of the E. B. Eddy Co. office, on your right as you enter Hull from Ottawa.

Regular transportation on the river was organized in 1819 when Philemon Wright instituted a service by the four-ton "Packet", a Durham boat propelled by oars and a sail. In 1822 Wright had Thomas Mears build a larger vessel in Hawksbury; a steam engine to propel it was moved up from Montreal. This boat, the "Union of the Ottawa", commenced service between Hull Landing and Grenville in 1823.

One building of the Wright era remains in Hull: the house of Thomas Brigham, Wright's son-in-law and manager of Columbia Farm, stands today on Boulevard St. Joseph almost as it did when built about 1837. Philemon Wright died in 1839; his will shows that he owned the major part of the built-up area of the city as it exists today. He left Columbia Farm to Brigham and the remainder of his estate in the Hull region to his sons Ruggles and Tiberius. The period of falling prices that prevailed from 1815 until past the time of his death seems to have prevented his acquiring great wealth.

Their tight family control of the natural site of a village or town acted to inhibit the growth of an administrative and commercial centre; Wright's Village remained merely a few manufactories serving an agricultural settlement. The nearby village of Aylmer became the seat of

*The City of Hull,*





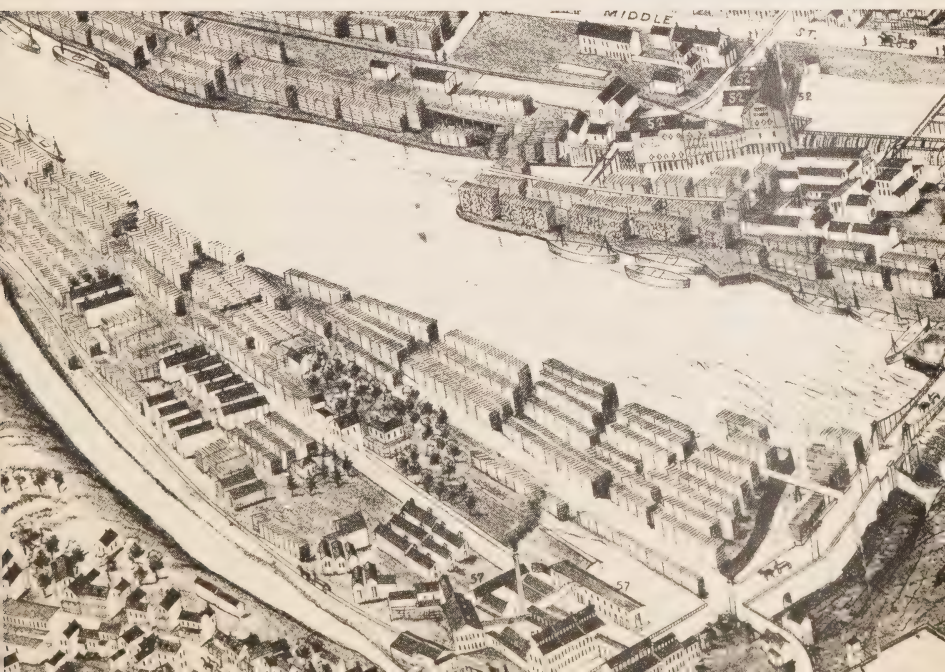
justice for the region and a fine stone court house and jail were built in 1852. This edifice suffered the usual fate and burned in 1868. However, the walls stood; today in the Town Hall at Aylmer you can see, like the Kingston Town Hall that was designed for the Parliament of Canada, the 1852 ambitions of a Lower Canada town that lost out in the struggle for supremacy with a more favoured city. But that struggle was decided long after 1868.

A legendary figure of Hull's early days was the giant raftsman Jos Montferrand, terror of the Shiners. One story of Jos tells how he kicked down, from below, the ceiling of a house where his enemies were hiding, as the preliminary to a free-for-all.

At the first election in the municipality of Hull Township in 1855, Christopher Brigham became mayor. There were few French Canadians there then; the seven council members all bore Anglo-Saxon or Celtic names. The Town Hall was located at Old Chelsea until 1866, then briefly at New Chelsea until 1870 when it was moved into the settlement at the Chaudière, now called Wrightstown.

In 1851 there had arrived another American, Ezra Butler Eddy, who, like Philemon Wright, was to introduce an era of development in the settlement. On the site of Wright's mills he established first a match factory, then a pail factory and in 1866 he built a great saw-mill. By this time Wrightstown was growing, for the construction of the government

, by H. Brosius



buildings in Ottawa had stimulated an influx of workers. Under the Rev. Delisle Reboul, an Oblate priest who had been a missionary among the Ottawa shantymen, a number of ecclesiastical buildings were erected, but these have been destroyed by fire. He was also a leader in pressing for municipal improvements. In 1870 Eddy bought Philemon Island\* from the Wright estate, and built a huge mill there; later he acquired another large property opposite the Parliament Buildings and here, in 1889, began to make sulphite pulp for paper. The Eddy Co. still occupies these sites. Today half a dozen paper-mills use the logs carried down by the rivers that meet near Ottawa, and cook their chemical pulp with the aid of off-peak electric power available at the falls and rapids on those rivers. From Hull eastward to Thurso are grouped the pulp, paper and fibre-board mills of the Ottawa region.

Other large industries beside Eddy's were established in Wrightstown. Wright, Batson and Currier had a huge saw-mill opposite the Parliament Buildings in the 1870's. Its site was sold to E. B. Eddy in 1883. The site of another, the Gilmour (later Gilmour and Hughson) mill, that stood at the east of today's Parc Jacques Cartier, dating originally from 1873, was marked until recently by a high brick stack. Andrew Leamy's steam mill cut logs near the mouth of the Gatineau from 1854 for about thirty years; it suffered from a series of disastrous boiler explosions.

Wrightstown became a city in 1875 and took the name of Hull. Here is a traveller's none too flattering description two years later, from the Richmond, Que., *Guardian*:

"Hull is remarkable only for its great lumber mills, factories, water power and muddy streets. It is a busy place, but wholly destitute of any pretensions to architecture or symmetry. One third of its houses are vacant and another third in an obvious condition of chronic rheumatism".

Hull was suffering then, along with the rest of Canada, from the profound economic depression of the late 70s. But small improvements were made. In 1878 the Ottawa Free Press reported that a dozen gasoline vapour streetlights had been installed, noting "Thus will the city emerge from the Egyptian darkness in which it has lain so long". Other services came slowly. It was not until 1886 that a piped water-supply was provided and about this time a sewer system was also constructed. Electric trams began to run in 1896.

The railway was late in coming to Hull. It was not until 1877 that

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\*That portion of the mainland adjacent to the Chaudière cut off by the timber slide.



the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occidental Railway reached the city. Shortly afterward this company bridged the Ottawa above the Chaudière, then sold out to the C.P.R. A line called the Pontiac and Pacific Junction Railway was extended up-river, eventually reaching Waltham, and another feeder line, the Ottawa and Gatineau, was built up the Gatineau River towards Maniwaki in 1893. These two companies, with financial aid from the municipal government of the capital, were responsible for the construction of the Alexandra Bridge that crosses the Ottawa River from Nepean Point, opened in 1901. In its day this was the greatest bridge in Canada.

Hull has other industries beside the processing of forest products. Since 1851 axes have been made there for the lumbermen; for a hundred years now the Walters Axe Co. has been in business. From quarries and pits partly located on Columbia Farm, partly on other former Wright property, cement has been made in Hull since 1830. Today the Canada Cement Co. marks the site of Canada's capital from afar with a grey-white plume that streams out in the prevailing westerly wind from its high stack. These busy mills have made the cement for all the big hydro-electric power dams upriver.

Hull, predominantly French-speaking and Roman Catholic today, was, because of its beginnings, first largely English-speaking and Protestant. The first Catholic chapel was built in 1846, and a large stone edifice in 1870. The first French Canadian councillor in the township was elected in 1868, but in seven short years the picture had changed, so that the municipal council of 1875 counted six of its ten members as French-speaking. The population figures are even more indicative: in 1851 about one-tenth was French-speaking; the proportions were about equal in 1870 and fifty years later only one-tenth was English speaking. The ratio has continued to diminish.

Hull has suffered from a series of calamitous fires that Ottawa has been mercifully spared from, except for one instance. In 1875, 1880, and 1888, large sections of the city were turned into blackened ruins. The Great Fire of 1900 wiped out half the built-up area. Under such conditions municipal development has suffered. A city hall was burned in 1888 and its replacement was destroyed in 1900. The present City Hall was constructed in 1901. During these destructive years the struggle went on with Aylmer for the possession of the district court house. Hull built an edifice in 1894 in anticipation of victory, which was indeed won three years later. No longer did lawyers have to drive eight miles by carriage along the Aylmer Road to court. But the holocaust of 1900 gutted the new court house and it had to be reconstructed.

It was not until 1928 that the Federal District Commission began to secure lands in the province of Quebec to extend its parks and

parkways. The story of the Commission's work is to be found in other publications.

By the Census of 1961 Hull's population was 56,929. This growing city is assuming a more and more important role as a centre of culture and administration, meriting the title "The Metropolis of Western Quebec". From Hull have come men and women prominent in the arts and in the world of sport. In the names of its streets the city perpetuates the great names of French Canada and of France such as Bourget, Cartier, Champlain, Dollard, Frontenac, Jeanne d'Arc, Joffre, Maisonneuve, Nicolet,

## OTTAWA HISTORIC BUILDINGS



*"Earnscliffe", Dalhousie near Sussex, 1857*



*Basilica, Sussex and St. Patrick, 1841*



*Commissariat Building,  
Rideau Canal, 1827*



*Castor Hotel, 453 Sussex Drive, 1865*



Papineau, Richelieu, Salaberry and Talon, to mention a few. Hull's citizens, like those of Ottawa, are fortunate in their geographical location on the frontier where two cultures of Canada meet, since they have a fine opportunity to know both.

For further reading on Hull see:

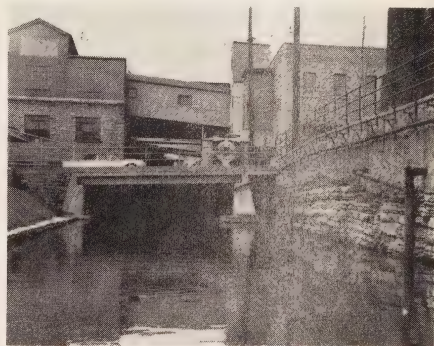
Cinq-Mars, E. E., *Hull, son origine, ses progrès, son avenir*, Hull, 1908.

Brault, Lucien, *Hull 1800–1950*, Ottawa, 1950.

## HULL HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES



*T. Brigham's house,  
376 St. Joseph Blvd., 1837*



*Wright's Timber Slide, Eddy St., 1829*



*Bridge, Chaudière Falls, 1827*



*R. W. Scott house, Gamelin Blvd.,  
1865*

# PLACES ABOUT OTTAWA

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The National Capital Region is an area of some 1,800 square miles in extent in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, surrounding the city of Ottawa. In form it is very roughly square, measuring about forty-five miles on each side. The Region, defined by the National Capital Act of 1959, comprises parts of Gatineau, Pontiac and Papineau counties in Quebec, and most of the County of Carleton, together with a small part of the counties of Lanark and Russell in Ontario.

The Region is cut by the Ottawa River, once the channel of ice-melt waters from great glaciers to the west and north. Its lands consist to a large extent of the rocky masses of the Canadian Shield, smoothed into rounded forms by the ice of the Pleistocene Era, cut by swift rivers flowing from the north, and dotted by numerous lakes. Much of the remainder consists of farmlands, deposits of soil left by the glaciers, now lying in the bed of a one-time great arm of the ocean that is today named the Champlain Sea.

North of the Ottawa, in Lower Canada, a line of townships bearing English names, two deep along the river, were planned in 1794. By 1800 Buckingham was the farthest west of these to be surveyed. The government of Upper Canada before the turn of century had sent surveyors to lay out townships along the Rideau River in what is now Carleton County.

In 1793 three brothers named Burritt came down the Rideau and established farmsteads in Marlborough Township about the site which is today called the village of Burritt's Rapids. William Merrick settled near the present-day Merickville in 1795. These two early communities actually lie outside the National Capital Region. Philemon Wright, as indicated earlier, was the pioneer of the Ottawa-Hull area. He was followed by Ira Honeywell in Nepean and Braddish Billings in Gloucester.

After the War of 1812 the British government commenced to encourage the emigration of settlers from Britain to Upper Canada; disbanded soldiers brought out their families, and other settlers also came. In 1816 a new community called Perth, designed to be the administrative





*The Mill of Kintail, Ramsay Township, Ont.*

centre for a group of Scottish emigrant settlers, who came in via the St. Lawrence, was established on the Tay River. Others came the next year to take up lands in Goulbourn and Beckwith townships.

It now became clear that emigrants bound for lands closer to the Ottawa should come via that river. Thus the Richmond settlers used that route in 1818 to reach their new home on the Jock River, named after the duke who was Governor General of Canada. In 1819, by horrible mischance, the Duke of Richmond died within a few miles of the settlement that bore his name, in the agony of a rabies infection.

At a dinner in Richmond the day before his death a township on the Ottawa had been named March, after the Duke's nephew. To March in 1819 came a group of retired army and navy officers and the merchant Hamnett Pinhey. Farther up the Ottawa, at the Chats Falls, Alexander Shirreff selected lands for his father Charles, who came the next year. On the Mississippi River, where Almonte is located today, David Sheppard

built a mill this same year. In 1821 and 1822 Daniel Shipman built other mills. Soon other settlers came in and settled nearby in Ramsay Township. About 1819 also, the Irishmen John Cavanagh and William Mooney settled in Huntley Township near Manion Corners. Other Irish Catholic settlers moved here from the Richmond settlement.

Across the river in Hull Township, friends of Philemon Wright established their farmsteads, particularly along the road to Lake Deschênes, today the Aylmer Road. In 1820 Stephen Blanchard built his farm in North Gower Township on the site of the village of North Gower. Sebra Beaman and Richard Garlick came the next year. The township of Pakenham was surveyed in 1822 and 1823; in the latter year a number of settlers established their homes along the Mississippi River. Robert Harvey secured land near falls at the site of the present-day village of Pakenham, and built small rural industries. In 1823 Peter Robinson, a member of the Upper Canada Legislative Council, after whom Peterborough was named, brought some 600 dispossessed Irish people to Canada; the next year they took up lands in Ramsay, Pakenham, Huntley, Goulbourn and Beckwith townships. In 1824 also William Buckham and Lieutenants Daniel Baird and James Grierson of the Royal Navy were the first to settle in Torbolton.

By 1824 Wright's Town in Lower Canada, at the Chaudière, was the dominant community on the Ottawa River, with mills, foundry, hotel, storehouse and its Anglican church. Farther east, at falls on the Lièvre, where later would be built the town of Buckingham, Baxter Bowman built a sawmill; Levi Bigelow, later to become a prominent lumberman, had settled nearby.

The last of the Upper Canada townships in the present National Capital Region to be settled was Osgoode, where the first pioneer, Archibald Macdonell took up lands near the site of modern Metcalfe in 1826.

The building of the Rideau Canal, commenced in 1826, and the establishment of the settlement of Bytown the next year, shifted the emphasis in economic development to the south side of the Ottawa River, and Wright's community languished from that time, while the centre that was to become the capital of the new nation Canada grew in size and importance.

On the north side of the Ottawa other communities were established. Charles Symnes started one at Lake Deschênes which soon received the name Aylmer. Others, called Buckingham, Wakefield, Chelsea, Cantley, Breckenridge, Luskville and Eardley, all bore English-sounding names, as did Hull. By about 1850 a shift in the population began in major centres, as French-speaking people moved into Hull and Buckingham. Much later, industrial communities based on paper-mills and wood-products





*The old home of Horace Pinhey in March Township, Ont.*

factories were established at Masson and Gatineau.

On the Ontario side Russell and Cumberland, the westernmost townships of Russell County, are the only ones today that are not predominantly French Canadian. Embrun was settled by French-speaking pioneers about 1845, St.-Joseph-d'Orléans (Orléans) in Gloucester township in 1849 and Cyrville, on Ottawa's outskirts, about 1850. The city of Eastview, located within the eastern part of Ottawa, started in the 1870s as a suburb of the capital under the name Janeville. Today, well over half of its population is French-speaking.

# MAJOR TOWNS AND VILLAGES OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

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## IN THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC;

**AYLMER** The townsite was surveyed in 1830 for Charles Symmes, nephew of Philemon Wright. He named his community after Baron Aylmer, governor-in-chief of Canada at the time. About 1842 Aylmer became the judicial seat for the district. Steam-driven sawmills were built. A fire in 1921 destroyed much of the town; several fine old stone houses still remain.

**BRECKENRIDGE, LUSKVILLE** and **EARDLEY** are small settlements today. The first two are named after early settlers, the latter after the township that lies west of Hull.

**QUYON.** This village, just below the foot of the Chats (pronounced Shaw) Falls (which are named for the *chats sauvages* — popular French Canadian name for the *raton laveur* or raccoon), owes its origin to the owners of the Union Forwarding Company, who built a horse-drawn railway by which goods, carried up-river this far by steamboat, were transferred to Lake Chats above the falls. John Egan ran a sawmill here.

**WYMAN.** This village is located on the western edge of the Region. The first settler in the area was Daniel Wyman in 1830. He was an associate of Philemon Wright.

**IRONSIDE.** Two miles west of this village is an iron mine that has operated sporadically since 1854. There was once a blast furnace here at the river's edge where the ore was refined.

**CHELSEA.** The name probably comes from Chelsea in Vermont. The first settlers arrived in 1819.

**OLD CHELSEA.** Thomas Brigham operated a mill here from about 1825.

**KIRK'S FERRY** is named after Thomas Kirk an Irishman, who once took passengers and freight over the river here.

**CASCADES** marks the site of a former rapid which was inundated when





*Ottawa River Museum, Hull, Que.*

the hydro-electric dam was built at Chelsea in 1927.

FARM POINT. Near here is the plant of the Aluminum Company of Canada, where magnesium ore is extracted to be shipped away for refining.

WAKEFIELD is named after the township. Thomas Stevenson settled on the east side of the Gatineau here, about 1830. William Fairbairn built the gristmill, which still stands, in 1838.

STE-CÉCILE-DE-MASHAM (Masham is the township). This mission of Ste-Cécile-de-La Pêche was begun here in 1840.

LIMBOUR is named for a priest who came from France in 1904 to select a site for his religious order; Collège St-Alexandre was built on the lands they acquired.

CANTLEY. The first settler in the area was David Blackburn, who came in 1827.

ST-PIERRE DE WAKEFIELD. The first settler here came from the Sorel

area. His name, Pelissier, has been given to a creek nearby. The first mission was established in 1859.

POLTIMORE. The Roman Catholic mission here dates from 1875.

POINT-GATINEAU is named for the river, which in turn took its name from the fur-trader Nicolas Gatineau dit Duplessis. French-Canadian forest workers settled here from about 1830.

GATINEAU is a recently created industrial town; it was established in 1926.

STE-ROSE-DE-LIMA. A chapel was erected here in 1889. One local tavern is named "R-100", after the great British dirigible, which flew to Ottawa in the 1930s.

PERKINS is named for John Adam Perkins, who built a sawmill here about 1845.

ANGERS (once "Ange Gardien") was first settled about 1851.

MASSON, an industrial community, was established in the 1880s.

*John Buckham's house, Torbolton Township, Ont., 1879.  
Buckham Bay in background.*



BUCKINGHAM. The first settler, Justus Smith, came in 1823. The falls on the Lièvre River here made the place an ideal industrial site, and mills were built. Buckingham was incorporated as a town in 1890. Today it is a thriving centre of the pulp and electro-chemical industries.

## IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO:

FITZROY HARBOUR. Charles Shirreff came here with his family in the winter of 1818–19.

GALETTA. The village was once called Hubbell's Falls, after the first owner of the land here. He sold out to James Steen in 1832. Steen built a mill, as later did James Galetti Whyte, after whom the place is named.

ANTRIM is the centre of a settlement named after the county in Ireland from which the first settlers came.

*The Royal Canadian Dragoons in Buckingham, Que., 1906 on the occasion of a strike of sawmill workers.*





KINBURN is named for the town in Scotland from which the original settlers came.

CARP, from its early days until today, a centre of rural industry, is named after the river on which it stands. The carp is certainly not seen in its sluggish waters today.

MACLAREN'S LANDING. The traces of the old steamboat wharf are visible.

BASKINS WHARF. This is another old steamboat wharf.

SOUTH MARCH. The Anglican church was built in 1839.

APPLETON. The first settlers, Robert and Joseph Teskey, arrived in 1823 and built mills here on the Mississippi. The textile mill is no longer water-driven.

ALMONTE. Daniel Shipman, an American, built a mill here in 1821. The settlement prospered; in 1856 it received its present name, after a Mexican general and politician. The town of Almonte became, and remains, a centre of textile manufacturing. There are many fine old buildings.

MILL OF KINTAIL. Once John Baird's gristmill, built in 1830, this building was converted into the summer home and studio of Robert Tait McKenzie, a Canadian surgeon and teacher in the field of physical education, also a sculptor. Today it is a museum in honour of McKenzie and the pioneers of the area.

PAKENHAM. The first settler, Robert Harvey (or Hervey) came in 1823. His was the first of a number of mills to be built at the falls on the Mississippi. Some fine buildings of the early days remain.

BELLS CORNERS is named for William Bell of Ireland, an early settler.

HAZELDEAN. The first settlers were some of the disbanded British soldiers, who came in 1818.

STITTSVILLE: The village is named for Jackson Stitt, a military settler of 1818.

HUNTLEY VILLAGE. John Cavanagh and William Mooney came from Ireland and settled here about 1819.

CORKERY was settled by Irish emigrants in 1827.

ASHTON. The lands here were taken up by disbanded soldiers in 1818.

MUNSTER was named by the original Irish settlers.

RICHMOND is the oldest community of any size in Carleton County. It was the centre of a military settlement in 1818. The Duke of Richmond, who gave the place its name, died a short distance north in 1819; a

cairn marks the spot. Some old stone buildings remain.

**MANOTICK.** The name is Indian, meaning "island in a river". M. K. Dickinson established a fine stone mill here in 1860; it is open to the public during the summer season.

**NORTH GOWER** is named after the Hon. J. L. Gower. The first settler, Stephen Blanchard, came in 1820.

**KARS** (once Wellington) is named after a battle in the Crimean War. The first settler, Richard Garlick, came in 1821.

**OSGOODE STATION** is named for William Osgoode, first chief justice of Upper Canada.

**SOUTH GLOUCESTER** is named for William Frederick, second Duke of Gloucester, brother of George III. The stone Roman Catholic church was started in 1847.

**METCALFE.** The village was named in 1845 for Baron Charles Metcalfe, governor general of Canada 1843–45.

**KENMORE** was named by its founder, Peter Maclaren, who came from Kenmore, Scotland, in 1832, and built a gristmill here on the Castor River.

**RUSSELL** (once called Duncanville) was named after the Hon. Peter Russell, administrator of Upper Canada, 1796–99. The first settler in the area came in 1825. The registry office for western Russell county is located here.

**EMBRUN.** The first settlers, French-Canadians, came in 1848. Their parish priest, Father Guillaume, named the town after a community in his native France.

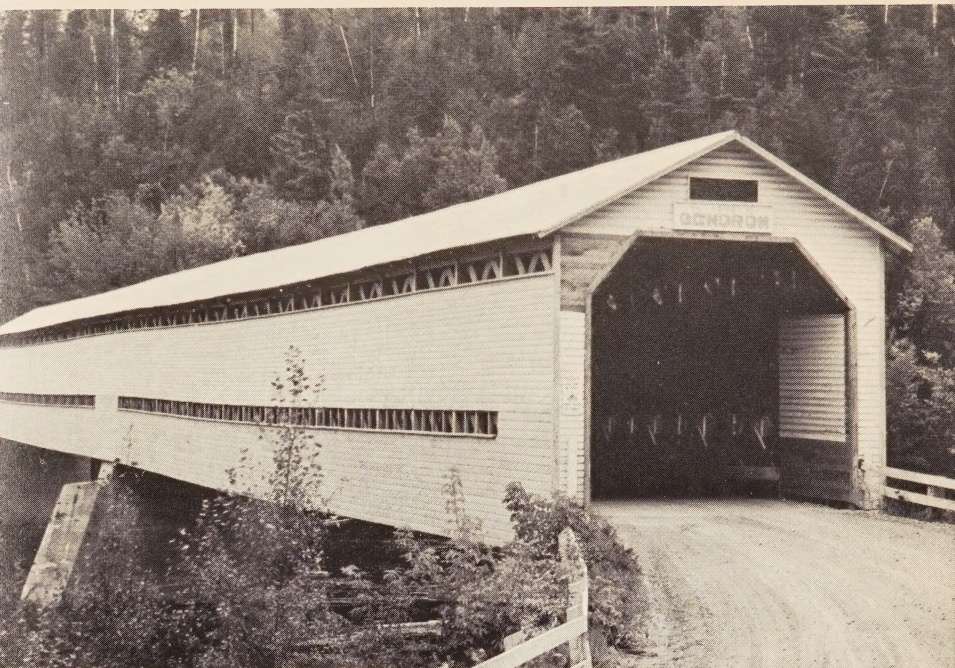
**VARS** was also named by Father Guillaume, after the district of Var in France.

**BEARBROOK.** The first settler in this area, James McRae, came in 1815. There were once 200 people in Bearbrook.

**CARLSBAD SPRINGS.** James Forsythe was the pioneer settler. About the time of Confederation Daniel Eastman built a travellers' hotel. In 1870 a large health resort hotel was built to which people from the capital came to visit the medicinal springs. There are still health resort hotels in the village.

**RAMSAYVILLE.** The first settlers came about 1850. The village has disappeared.

**HAWTHORNE.** The area was settled about 1832.



*Covered bridge near Wakefield, Que.*

CYRVILLE. The land here was first occupied by Joseph and Michel Cyr about 1850.

NAVAN. Scots settled here in the 1840s.

SARSFIELD dates from 1867.

CUMBERLAND. The American Abijah Dunning arrived here with his four sons in 1801.

ORLÉANS. When Bishop Guigues of Bytown (later Ottawa) visited here in 1849, he found a few French Canadian families. It was probably Father Chaine, a Frenchman from France, the first resident curé, who named the village.



# THE FUTURE OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

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The population of the metropolitan area comprising Ottawa and Hull, like other urban concentrations of the world in this day of rapid growth of cities, is expanding at a great rate. To ensure that the city of Ottawa should grow in an orderly manner the National Capital Commission has established a Greenbelt around the city on its western, southern and eastern sides, an area which is being carefully planned with an eye to the future. Already, just beyond the edge of the Greenbelt, satellite communities of advanced design, sympathetic to new concepts of pleasant living, are springing up.

The Commission has also established and developed the great Gatineau Park in the province of Quebec, north and west of Hull and west of the Gatineau River. This wise step has ensured that there will be forever wild terrain and a fine recreation area close to the metropolitan zone. This park and the Greenbelt are the two large areas in the Region outside the Ottawa-Hull urban area which the Commission owns and develops.

Old areas of the cities of Ottawa and Hull are being studied with a view to their redevelopment, while in the countryside other agencies of government and the private sector are establishing recreational facilities. Planners, with the aid and advice of historians and architects, are striving to retain at least some of the structures erected in past days, so that our cities and countryside will present to the eye some perspective in time, some indication of the continuity of man's presence.

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NOTE: Map opposite page 1, together with paintings, drawings and photographs on pages 2, 5, 6, 12, 13 and 14-15 are reproduced by courtesy of Public Archives of Canada. Photograph of Castor Hotel was supplied by Mr. E. Chevrier. It was taken about 1882. Captions under photographs on pages 18 and 19 show the dates of construction. Illustration on page 26 is from Belden's *Historical Atlas of Carleton County, 1879*.



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